121 554 Here we are interested in the way in which roles and groups, and a whole structure of authority, operate over a wide area.

In the previous section, I presented the 'aqila as a specialized political role in Bedouin political organization. As Radcliffe-Brown (1940:xviii-xxi) has pointed out, in the political analysis of segmentary societies it is necessary to isolate incipient authority roles which function to make decisions concerning rightness and wrongness in disputes and which represent the community, giving voice to public sentiment. The notion of society as a functional system of authority roles and authority groups is clear in Radcliffe-Brown's treatment of politics.

121 554 571 Local groups of political significance, i.e., authority groups, are identified by the status position, or office, referred to as 'aqila. The political relations within a local * [613] tertiary group, and between it and similar groups of a lineage and tribe, must be seen as relationships between authority roles.

554 596 * 613 In the domestic field of political relations, the authority of the Bedouin 'aqila shades into the familial authority sphere of the household head (shaib). The shaib, as senior agnate of his naja', is dominant over the other males of his tertiary sub-unit, but not to the extent that he can pre-empt any of their rights as members of the tertiary • [888] [578] corporate group. A shaib, by virtue of his age, is supposed to possess the wisdom which it takes to regulate conflict.

Muftah said that he had taken his daughter away
593 to punish Hemeida for what he thought was disrespectful behavior. He
574 then proceeded to descirbe how Hemeida, after bringing the blanket out
606 for Muftah, went inside and spent the night with his wife, defying the
586 basic rule of not showing intimacy in the presence of older people,
627 especially the parents or parents-in-law. For, to show such intimacy
792 is a sign of disrespect. He demanded that Hemeida pay him "kabara"
888 for his injured pride. The term kabara refers to the adjective "kebir"
[681] (lit. respected or big man). Kabara is the fine paid for belittling
[558] someone by word or deed. Muftah insisted that he would not allow his daughter to return to her husband until Hemeida had paid that kabara. Hemeida conceded the fact that intimacy constitutes an insult; but he insisted that his action did not constitute an act of intimacy with his wife, but was a matter of convenience and necessity, since he had only
593 two blankets, and the only one left was that inside the tent. Muftah
574 became angry and started shouting at Hemeida, who, in turn, started
606 shouting back; it became impossible to follow what was being said.
586 The religious man interfered in the discussion, trying to stop the argu-
627 ment between Muftah and Hemeida. The others attending the mi'ad also
792 interfered. The religious man and two neighbors took Muftah outside
[578] the tent while Muftah's brother tried to calm Hemeida down. The other members of the group also calmed Hemeida, reminding him that he was the younger person and must be more tolerant of older people. They also reminded Hemeida that Muftah was his father-in-law and had the right to take his daughter away any time he chose. They urged him to "defeat the devil"
[681] and to apologize to his father-in-law and pay him kabara. He seemed convinced but insisted that all he was going to pay was five pounds and a goat. Muftahh brother and one of the neighbors then left the tent and